

Message Text

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FROM AMBASSADOR FOR EUR DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY VINE

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: OTRA, SV, NO, PFOR
SUBJ: CONSULTATIONS WITH NORWEGIAN FOREIGN MINISTRY ON THE ARCTIC
REF: OSLO 4781

1. IN CONVERSATION TODAY WITH FOREIGN MINISTRY FRYDENLUND, I MENTIONED TO HIM THAT IF OSLO CONSULTATIONS TOOK PLACE AS PROPOSED IN SECOND HALF OF JANUARY, THEY ARE LIKELY TO OCCUR AFTER COMPLETION OF OUR STUDY. HE THEN ASKED DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR POLITICAL AFFAIRS VIBE TO LOOK INTO ALTERNATIVE DATES. AT CLOSE OF BUSINESS IN FOREIGN MINISTRY, VIBE HAD HAD TIME ONLY TO DISCUSS DATES WITH DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR LEGAL AFFAIRS ELIASSEN WHO SUGGESTED THAT DEC 18, 19 AND 20 WOULD SEEM LIKE BEST EARLIER ALTERNATIVE FOR VARIETY OF REASONS.

2. MAJOR CONSIDERATION IN PROPOSING JANUARY CONSULTATIONS WAS CONCERN THAT THERE MAY BE SUBSTANTIVE CHANGES IN SVALBARD POLICY AS RESULT OF STORTING DEBATE WHICH WILL OCCUR ON DEC 16 OR 17 (NOT NOV 17 AS INDICATED IN REFTEL). THE THREE STORTING COMMITTEES (FOREIGN AFFAIRS, INDUSTRY, FINANCE) WHICH VISITED SVALBARD LAST SPRING CAME BACK STEAMED UP OVER NEED FOR NORWAY TO ASSERT ITS SOVEREIGNTY MORE STRONGLY ON THE ARCHIPELAGO. VIBE WOULD NOT BE SURPRISED IF STORTING STRENGTHENS THE CONCLUSIONS OF THE

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PRESENT JUSTICE MINISTRY REPORT. NORWEGIANS BELIEVE THEIR

CONSULTATIONS WITH US SHOULD TAKE THESE CONCLUSIONS INTO
CONSIDERATION. AND THEY EXPECT TO BEGIN PREPARATION
FOR STORTING DEBATE IN PERIOD BETWEEN CONSULTATIONS WITH
BRITHS AND SOVIETS IN NOVEMBER.

3. THERE ARE OTHER FACTORS AFFECTING TIME. NORWEGIANS
ARE CONCERNED THAT NEGOTIATIONS WITH SOVIETS ON BARENTS SEA
CONTINENTAL SHELF MAY RUN INTO FIRST WEEK IN DECEMBER AND
THEY ARE NOT PARTICULARLY ANXIOUS TO HAVE BOTH DELEGATIONS
IN TOWN AT SAME TIME, FOR COSMETIC AS WELL AS PRACTICAL PROB-
LEMS OF AVAILABLE PERSONNEL. SECOND WEEK IN DECEMBER WILL
BE OCCUPIED WITH PREPARATIONS FOR NATO MINISTERIAL AND
MINISTERIAL ITSELF, WHICH TIES UP KEY OFFICIALS IN WHAT IS
AFTER ALL A VERY SMALL MINISTRY. NORWEGIANS ARE EVEN
LESS ANXIOUS TO HAVE U.S. DELEGATION ARRIVING TO DISCUSS
SVALBARD AT BEGINNING OF FOLLOWING WEEK (MONDAY, DEC 15)
ON EVE OF AND PERHAPS COINCIDENT WITH STORTING DEBATE. HENCE
PROPOSAL FOR WHAT THEY RECOGNIZE IS DATE WHICH IS A BIT LATE
AND CLOSE TO CHRISTMAS TO BE ENTIRELY DESIRABLE.

4. VIBE PROMISED TO THINK ABOUT ALTERNATIVE DATES OVER THE
WEEKEND, BUT OBVIOUSLY HOPES THAT YOU WILL FIND DEC 18-20
PERIOD ACCEPTABLE. FROM OUR STANDPOINT, OF COURSE, YOUR
WISHES IN THIS MATTER ARE THE DETERMINING FACTOR. THERE
IS SOME LOGIC, HOWEVER, TO THE NORWEGIAN POSITION IF THE
TIMING WILL ALLOW YOUR CONSULTATIONS HERE TO TAKE PLACE
BEFORE OUR STUDY IS CONCLUDED. WE WOULD APPRECIATE EARLY
REPLY SINCE VIBE WILL BE DISCUSSING QUESTION WITH DCM ON

MONDAY, NOV 3.

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